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WITH MODERATE MEANS.

BY ELLA RODMAN CHURCH,

AUTHOR OF "HOW TO FURNISH A HOME," &c.

DINING-ROOM DETAILS.

"WHAT a day we have had of it! But I have certainly gained considerable knowledge, not only in the way of finding things not what they seem, but also that their value appears to vary at different places. Just think of that extension table for instance, a difference of \$4.00 in the price at D——'s and C—— & N——'s, and the lower price at what is generally considered an extravagant place!"

"You will encounter this phenomena frequently as you go about. D—— makes good articles and asks fair prices for them; but often he is cheaper than the so-called cheap dealers. Low-priced goods are often dear rather than cheap. The table at D——'s was \$14.00, was it not?"

"Yes, and quite a pretty table too. I had no idea that ash would look so well. And they asked \$18.00 for the very same thing at C—— & N——'s!"

"Yes, I remember all its attractions only too well, for I fell in love with it on the spot; but I had sense enough left to know that such an article would be utterly out of place among my other belongings."

"That is just the point I wished you to arrive at, and bearing this in mind we shall get on faster with our furnishing. Miss Gray, of whom you have often heard me speak as a model of economy in dressing well on nothing at all, always said that one of her fixed principles was not to be led astray by shop windows, and when she set out to buy a serviceable merino, nothing could persuade her into taking a cheap silk. You can afford good ash for your dining-room, but not mahogany nor oak at present, therefore avoid the cheap veneered imitations and let your furniture be thorough of its kind. And very pretty the room will be with those pale olive walls and maroon upholstery."

"Maroon! Why I thought it was against the law to have anything but green in a dining-room, and you know how charming Aunt C——'s dining-room is?"

"Very charming indeed; the whole picture rises before me this minute and it is one for which nature and art have done their utmost. Nature being represented in this case by the perfect, although not extensive, proportions of the room, and the one large recessed window, also in the Indian red tint of the walls and the pale blue of the ceiling with a judicious mingling of mahogany and gold in the moldings. But those superb chairs upholstered in figured silk, velvet of that perfect shade of olive and finished at the top with brass rods and lions heads, were cheap at \$25 a piece by the dozen, while the massive mahogany dining-table, side board, dresser, etc., with their fine carving and brass railings and ornaments, represent a small fortune. The silver, glassware and china, too, are all in keeping with such a room."

"Well, I will return meekly then to my ash and maroon. I really do not think it will be bad either, but what is to be the material of the covering?"

"I would suggest enameled cloth, for your chairs will not have hard usage, and with care this material, which is considerably cheaper than leather, will look well for a long time. Put down on your list six dining-room chairs at \$5.00 apiece—I think they can be bought for about that sum."

"That is not discouraging, only \$44 for chairs and table. A sideboard is the next thing, I suppose?"

"No, leave that for a while. You must have one arm chair, which will cost from \$15 to \$20. And you have as yet no floor covering, also no curtains."

"The plot thickens rapidly. I begin to feel quite poor again."

"The dining-room, with all its belongings, is by no means a cheap room to furnish, and I should say that, with this and the kitchen once secured, you could 'go on with better grace to the other rooms.' The dining-room floor has been a study for me, and the discourse I propose to make on it has several heads."

"Let us attack one head at a time please, which is the most formidable?"

"The most reasonable and economical one appears in the guise of straw matting which is very appropriate for the coming season, and it can be bought now of good quality for twenty-five cents a yard, although it has not hitherto been safe to touch it under thirty-five or forty cents; a flimsy straw matting being one of the most unsatisfactory purchases that can be made."

"The price is alluring, certainly, but I should like to discuss the other heads before deciding."

"The next head requires a stained border of a yard, or three-quarters around the wood work, and a rug made of that fifty inch wide, furniture covering in a fine stripe of red and gold, which had quite a thick pile and was the same on both sides. The salesman said that it was often made into rugs, and at \$1.25 a yard it would not be an expensive floor covering."

"I should like that ever so much, it would look so nicely with the ash and maroon. Let us see now what it will cost; the room is about 16 x 17."

"The expense of the material would be, perhaps, \$21, but it could easily be made at home and finished with brass rings at intervals on the binding to be attached to nails in the floor, so that it can be frequently taken up and shaken."

"And the matting at a yard wide would come to only about \$6.60. I am afraid it will have to be the matting. But what was the other plan?"

"A drugget or felt carpet, which you can get in maroon and gold at from \$8 to \$12, and which will look very well indeed. This also implies a stained floor."

"Well, auntie, I must have the striped rug, I have quite set my heart on it. So I will put down 'dining-room carpet \$21,' and if the money falls short why then I can go back to the matting. Now, what kind of curtains can I get for almost nothing?"

"The nearest approach to it, I think that will look well is cheese cloth lined with dark red silesia and trimmed with bands of maroon colored canton flannel. Loop them back with bands of the canton flannel lined with the silesia, hang on inconspicuous poles of ash and you will have pretty curtains that fall in soft folds for the moderate price of about \$2.50 a window."

"Why, it is going to be a lovely room after all, and I am very much interested in it. But it certainly needs some kind of a sideboard."

"Either that or a sort of two-story table, I admit. You can obtain one of the latter for \$17, but a regular sideboard will cost you from \$25 to \$50, and even at that price it is of the most moderate description. The sideboard is very convenient to put things on and to keep things in, but the table, too, is useful in this way, as it has a couple of drawers and the same amount of shelves. It would be well to begin with the table and let the money thus saved go toward a lounge, for you will find the dining-room a very pleasant sitting and reception-room when you do not care to use the parlor."

"So I shall I dare say, only I like better generally to sit up stairs. But the lounge will be rather extravagant, won't it? We did not see one the other day you know under \$22, even of the plainest, and they thought nothing of asking us \$35 and \$40."

"Those are ordinary prices, but I have a crony, in the shape of a queer little German, who is a very good cabinet-maker and upholsterer, and extremely moderate in his charges. He will make you a satisfactory lounge for from \$15 to \$18, according to the covering, which you must get yourself, as he keeps nothing of the kind. The cheap lounges which you see ready made at \$8 and \$10 are not worth buying, but you can practice economy without getting poor furniture by employing, for occasional pieces, some obscure workman who has no such expenses to meet as those who do business in large warehouses. Be very sure of your workman, though from some friend's experience, and do not give him the power to spoil your house. Where mere upholstery is needed he will do very well, but for the style and finish of things it is best to go to a firm of known reputation."

"I am ready for the queer little German whenever you are auntie, and I expect to find him a perfect prize. What is to be done with the dining-room mantel? Cover and lambrequin it, I suppose?"

"Not too hastily. I saw a very pretty, low mantel arrangement the other day, with French plate mirrors that would set off the room and reflect to great advantage the few ornaments you can afford for the shelf. The price was \$20, and very reasonable too. I would take it even at the sacrifice of straw matting in place of the rug."

"I mean to take both, on paper at least, and if the things 'won't add up,' I must devise some other way of bringing them to terms. Now that the dining-room seems to be finished, here are the exact figures: Dining table, \$14; chairs, \$30; arm-chairs, \$15; rug, \$21; curtains, \$5; side table, \$17; lounge, \$15; chimney piece, \$20. Total \$137. Why this is simply dreadful! I had no idea that a few things would mount up so. What will become of the rest of the house?"

"You have not finished with the dining-room

yet, as it would be somewhat incomplete without a few articles of table ware."

"Of course! china, and silver, and glass, and damask, and—Oh, I shall give up entirely with all these back waters coming in! The house will never get furnished, at this rate, on a thousand dollars."

"Perhaps not quite at this rate, but we can try the experiment, and if things obstinately refuse to 'add up,' we will discard some of the superfluities. Now then for china; you can get a very good dinner set of English decorated ware at from \$15 to \$20, and a breakfast and tea set as low as \$4.50. This ware comes in different colors and the blue is exceptionally pretty. Your glass ware at first need amount to very little, as you will not give extensive entertainments, and pieces of cut glass maké convenient Christmas gifts, anniversary presents, etc. It will, therefore, show only a proper consideration for your friends to leave a margin for such occasions. Get one dozen pressed glass goblets with an engraved band which look very well indeed, and which need cost but eighty cents, two glass dishes of the same style for fruit and other things at thirty cents each, and two salt cellars at fifteen cents apiece. There is nothing superfluous here, but you do not want superfluity, you merely wish to do the best you can with a limited sum of money."

"Well, auntie, it is as well to know the worst, so what about the silver?"

"Not to be thought of at all my dear; you must get plated ware to supply what your wedding presents fail to cover. You have one dozen each of solid silver spoons and forks; these in best, triple-plated ware would have cost you for the forks \$10, and for the spoons about \$5. The same for table spoons, and you can get a sugar bowl and cream pitcher for about \$15. Let the coffee pot be of *black tin* which comes in very nice shapes at a cost of \$1. It can be kept bright and shining by washing it with diluted ammonia, which gives it a silvery gleam. Embroider a pretty 'cosy' for it in scarlet or blue; this not only keeps the coffee warm but sets off the table wonderfully."

"For a teapot you can get some pretty Japanese device for fifty or seventy-five cents, or you can use the blue one belonging to your set of china. You will need a dozen celluloid handled knives at \$6, and a carver and steel at \$3. Two salt spoons at fifty cents each. A celery glass costs seventy-five cents, a water pitcher about forty cents, and a molasses pitcher fifty. A small tray for the waiter is also a necessity, but this need not cost over fifty cents."

"The table things alone then will amount to \$74.85, at the lowest estimation, and there are still table cloths and napkins to be provided."

"Fortunately, such things are very cheap now and you can get a fair quality of damask for ordinary use at seventy-five cents a yard. With an under cover of canton flannel it will have a very good effect and look quite silky. Two regular cloths for extra occasions can be had at \$3 apiece, and good-napkins for common wear are as low as \$1.25 a dozen. Two dozen of these and a dozen better ones at \$2.50 will come to \$5 in all. How does the account stand now?"

"For everything, the dining-room absorbs \$229.61, a formidable slice out of \$1,000."

"Nearly as much as we have appropriated to the parlor, but think how many needs are provided for with this sum. You will have, too, a room that will be a pleasure to look at and useful, as I have said before, for other purposes than a dining-room. You must be sure to have a few bracket shelves in ash for books, newspapers, etc., and this addition with a cover for your table when it is off duty and a linen scarf for the pretty *dressoir* or side table will bring expenses well up to \$235."

"But large colored table-covers cost more than you are allowing auntie, and I do not see what can possibly be bought for so small a sum."

"I will enlighten you then. You can get two yards and a half of wide, double-faced canton flannel, which requires no lining, at from fifty to seventy-five cents a yard, the color of which should be maroon to match the curtains. One yard of the same material in old gold will make a very nice band for the border. This will cost very little if made at home, and what is left of the \$235 will pay for shelves and linen scarf, the latter to be ornamented by yourself with drawn work and fringe."

"Well, I like the room as it appears to my inner vision wonderfully, and perhaps the money will hold out, after all."

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